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ABSTRACT

The third book in a 5-book manual on day camping discusses the campers themselves. Section I provides a case study of the pre-school camper and the counselor. Section II addresses the needs and characteristics of children from ages 6-12 and describes what children need from parents, teachers, playmates, and community. Section III discusses the programs, leadership styles, personal objectives, camp atmosphere, and intercamp relationships that appeal to campers over 12 years of age. Section IV discusses the place of the different or atypical child in a camp situation by presenting case studies of campers with emotional, physical, and mental problems. The final section is a discussion of discipline as a matter of human relations. A reading list completes the book. (SB)

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day camp manual

THE CAMPER

Ontario

Ministry of Culture and Recreation

Sports and Fitness Division

Hon. Reuben C. Baetz
Minister
Robert D. Johnston
Deputy Minister

The material for Day Camp Manuals
was originally written and compiled by William Babcock,
Ontario Camping Association.

The 1974 revisions were prepared by
members of the Day Camp Committee, Ontario Camping Association
for Sports and Recreation Bureau
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TITLES IN THE DAY CAMP SERIES

1. Administration
2. Staff
3. The Camper
4. Program
5. A Study of Mandatory Standards
   and Desirable Practices for
   Children's Day Camps

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Day Camp Manual
Book III

The Day Camper

Credo

If campers live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If campers live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If campers live with jealousy, they learn to feel guilty.

If campers live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.

If campers live with encouragement, they learn to be confident.

If campers live with praise, they learn to be appreciative.

If campers live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If campers live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If campers live with honesty, they learn what truth is.

If campers live with fairness, they learn justice.

If campers live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and those about them.

If campers live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

Adapted from "As a Twig is Bent"
Kleinknecht Encyclopedia

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the Pre-School Camper and the Counselor (a case study)

Each summer many of us share our days with a pre-school camper. To meet that child's emotional and intellectual needs we must encourage his or her abilities; share and enjoy the growing and learning experiences of that child.

Each child has an individuality, a uniqueness. The youngster comes to our group from a unique home situation, from an emotional and intellectual environment, with varying specific needs and abilities. The child comes to us with the seeds of basic human creativity, the desire to express his or her uniqueness. Margaret Mead tells us "It is the child's growing capacity to take in the world, re-work experience, and give it out again in speech, song, craft or art, and in all the activities in which men engage; that is the source of individuality."

Each child sees the same sight through different eyes, hears the same sound through different ears. To each, the same experience has a unique meaning. The expression of the thoughts and feelings gained from his or her experience is unique to each child, and therefore valid and worthwhile.

We must be prepared to be totally receptive to the child's thoughts and feelings. In expressing these experiences, the youngster is presenting himself or herself, saying "this has meaning to me, this is what I feel, how I think, this is who I am." Our reaction is crucial to the child. Children work on a mirror basis. They see themselves reflected in your reaction to them. If you react to what children say or do in a negative manner they feel themselves deserving of that negative reaction. If they sense condemnation, they experience rejection, self doubt. If they sense acceptance, respect, they feel themselves acceptable, having worth.

Just as we can help children to enjoy positive learning and growing times, we can help them to understand and accept their negative feelings without fear or reproach, shame, or need of guilt. One of the vital learning areas for children is their growing ability to accept and deal with anger, sadness, and fear. We must help them to express threatening fantasies and accept reassurance and safety in adult comfort.

If children have learned to trust you, if they have learned that your words are words they can understand, that your promises are reliable, and that they are important to you, they may reach out to you with their feelings. Their hands find yours when they are afraid. They yell at you when angered, or climb into your lap when unsure or sad. Help them to accept their anger and their sadness, and meet the fear.

What about a child that misbehaves? What about discipline? What about control? Control is a very dangerous term, a term with many meanings. Each counselor brings to the children a very different conception of control, depending on his or her feelings about control, need for control, experiences in controlling, and in being controlled. As counselors we have only one right in our group, the right to make our children feel safe and protected. We have no right to impose arbitrary forms of control on our children, unless the emotional or physical safety of each of the children is in question. We have no right to restrict free thought or movement of the individual child. We do have the very important right to make some relevant decisions for that child regarding physical well-being. "Yes, it is cold out this morning, and you must wear your sweater." "No, I will not allow you to run around the playground with a sharp stick." We can make these decisions for the child. We must ensure a child's safety and comfort. We must protect the child without resorting to unnecessary restrictions. We must help the child to develop controls from within, and take special care not to impose arbitrary forms of control from without. We cannot impose our sense of control on children to the detriment of the development of their own controls.

What about the child whose behavior does disturb the safety of the other children? The child who is throwing sand at another camper in the sandbox may be asked to leave that situation and given a positive alternative. You perhaps might ask if he or she would have more fun on the tricycle. Deal with the child's negative behavior in a positive manner. If the misdemeanor merits admonishing, then direct your discipline at the misdemeanor, not at the child. Never make the child the object of your ridicule. If you regard children's behavior with large doses of condemnation or anger, they will feel as though they deserve that condemnation, and will feel shame, and guilt. Let them know that what they have done, not who they are, is unacceptable.

Just as a child's tears are a sign of a need for help, so misbehavior reflects a need, serving as a symptom of his or her negative feelings. Why is a particular child behaving in such a manner? What does that behavior mean to her or to him? What does it mean to you? A child's anger is very difficult to deal with at times. Perhaps because we are reminded too clearly of our own. You can never fail by asking for help. You can only fail in responsibility when you fail a child. Ask for help to learn how to reach your children.

There is perhaps something incomplete about the picture created here. The counselor described is a bit unreal, a super counselor, champion of the correct way with children, pillar of patience, good nature and kindness. Let's face it, we too have very important feelings of our own. We get angry at times, and feel sad too. Our children should learn to understand that we too have our valid feelings. We will lose control at times, but what can we do when we do lose control of our feelings? We must regain it as soon as possible and interpret our anger to the child. We must take special care not to alienate the child at these times, not to make him or her fear our feelings. We must interpret our feelings in such a way as to make them safe to the youngster. Let the child know that you are angry. You have the right to be angry. But, regain control and reassure the child immediately. The child should feel safer because of knowing your limits. We must not betray our children by being dishonest, whether in feelings, actions, or words.

We've mentioned the possible problems that you may encounter with campers, and tried to suggest some of the positive ways to help your children deal with these problems. Now let's consider the happy, fun times that we can share with our children. One of the most enjoyable and rewarding qualities of being with pre-school children is sharing their fun. It gives us a chance to return to the magical games of play that we ourselves enjoyed so much when we were three or four, and enjoy that time all over again. Sharing these games, joining in them on the same level as the child is experiencing them, is so important to our relationship to the child. The ability to play, to enjoy, comes with just a little abandonment and relaxation of the formidable adult role. As you join a child playing in sand, or running in the playground, you share with him or her real and good feelings. You may develop a satisfying affection for that child as you come to know the youngster and have fun together. Don't be concerned about favoritism; the natural and spontaneous expression of affection is part of such a relationship. Those children sure are huggable at times, and they enjoy being hugged. A whole day away from home and mummy is a very long time for pre-school children. They need warmth, mothering and a bit of loving-up. Don't feel inhibited or restricted about meeting the need.

In summary, we've dealt with many aspects of pre-school campers and their counselor. We've looked at the uniqueness of their thoughts, feelings and individual manner of expressing them. We've considered how important it is to those children that you accept them, that you help them understand and accept themselves. They will come to you with their anger, fear, and tears, as well as the excitement, enthusiasm, and the great joy of discovery.

We must help them to accept all that they are, to greet learning with a sense of excitement and confidence in their ability. We must share their creativity, the expression of self, the pride of uniqueness.

We must deal with them honestly, so they may learn to trust us, learn that our words are words that they can understand, our promises reliable and that they are important people to us.

We must strive to know our pre-school child. We must watch, listen, observe before we act. For we must act with real understanding, real compassion. We must offer safety and protection and at the same time freedom to explore the bounds of curiosity. We will come to share ourselves with the child, and we must be prepared to be totally receptive to all that the child is able to give to us.

Children's Needs and Characteristics

Every child is different. Each is a small reflection of his or her own home. Each has his or her own level of ability, individual likes and dislikes.

However, children of about the same age have interests in common and many similarities.

What are some of the general needs of children?

fun	adventure	friendship
love	activity	knowledge
trust	independence	understanding
acceptance	new skills	shelter
guidance	encouragement	food

Six Years

- period of slow growth Rest period. Child must not go home tired
- eager to learn
- self assertive
- inconsistent in behavior
- short attention span
- finds decision-making difficult
- group activities are popular
- spontaneous dramatization, keen to dress up
- learns better by doing, not listening.

Seven Years

- sensitive to opinions of peers and adults
- interests of boys and girls begin to diverge
- energetic but easily fatigued
- unable to think in abstract terms
- more inclined to be self-critical; a great need for approval
- growth is slow and steady
- leadership will start to show here
- aggressiveness also will start to show here.

Eight Years

- careless and noisy but socially minded
- at times more dependent on mother
- interests of boys and girls differ, gangs develop
- more enthusiasm than wisdom
- allegiance to peer group rather than adults
- better able to judge his or her own abilities
- ready for simple directed dramatics
- interested in collecting things, enjoys team games.

Nine Years

- reasonable, dependable, responsible
- strong sense of right and wrong
- individual differences in abilities very pronounced
- longer attention span, not over 45 minutes
- given to exaggeration
- highly competitive
- enjoys stories, nature tales and rhythmic music
- stealing not uncommon
- can assume more responsibility
- a limited sense of money and time values
- gang spirit strong
- perfectionist but easily discouraged
- outspoken and critical of adults
- argues over fair play
- likes repetition
- loves animals
- often is clumsy
- this age has a natural curiosity
- likes fun, the fun angle, not the educational approach
- loves dramatics, costumes, and story-telling.

Ten, Eleven and Twelve Years

- great physiological development
- group minded age; the gang is supreme
- begins to challenge adults; quarrelling, loud voices and fighting are common
- wants the love of an adult, often develops crushes
- wants to be older
- interest can be sustained for a long time, even a whole camp period
- prefers group activities
- likes adventure
- will take long hikes, nothing daunts him/her
- tremendous amount of intellectual activity; nature, science, songs, vocational plans, needs much program
- will accept cooking responsibilities
- will work on construction projects
- likes berry picking, fishing
- curious about art
- likes to plan own pow-wows
- has a real sense of responsibility
- has a real sense of humor
- has a sense of fair-play
- loves to talk about home and family relationships.

CHART OF CHILD NEEDS

Prepared for the Ontario Teachers' Federation

by: The Canadian Mental Health Association

NEEDS	From Parents	From Teachers	From Playmates	From Community
Emotional Affection (feeling of being loved)	Comradeship. Playing no favorites. Serenity in home.	Evident fondness for child. Happy co-operative atmosphere in classroom. Kindness, fairness.	Friendships. Interest in child's achievements.	Understanding teachers. Active child welfare agencies and kind foster parents when home supervision breaks down.
Belonging (feeling of being wanted by the group)	Significant share in family work and play. Proud of child as member of family.	Welcoming child in school and giving real share in activities of classroom and playground.	Companionship. Genuine share in group's activities.	Inspiring child's co-operation to contribute to the beauty, health and welfare of the community.
Independence (feeling of managing and directing own life)	Child helped to stand on own feet. Given opportunities to make decisions and choose friends with reasonable guidance.	Initiative encouraged. Participation in class discussions. Training in self control and self direction.	Child given his or her turn in doing things and being leader.	Opportunities for older children and youth to have part in community councils.
Achievement (satisfaction from making things and doing jobs)	Encouragement in school work. Opportunities for worthwhile tasks; hobbies and adventure.	Work at which child can succeed. Opportunities for success in sports, hobbies, dramatics, etc.	Child included in school projects, sports, dramatics, musical and other activities.	Vocational guidance. Share in community enterprises—recyling, organic gardening, church activities, etc.
Social Approval (feeling that others approve of conduct and efforts)	Praise for good behavior, honest effort in work and other accomplishments (sports, making friends, etc.)	Commendation for good behavior, diligence in school work, success in sports, dramatics, music, etc.	Generous admiration for child's accomplishments in school work, sports, dramatics, etc.	Credit for [illegible] activities.
Self Esteem (feeling of being worthwhile)	Confidence in child and child's future.	Making child feel a worthwhile person. Helping child understand and accept his or her strengths and weaknesses.	Appreciation of child's good qualities	Making child feel he or she matters to community. Giving her or him a share in community enterprises.
Intellectual (for training in ability to think clearly and solve problems wisely)	Encouraging children to find out the facts before coming to conclusions.	Training children to think in an orderly fashion, to acquire sound study habits, and to read widely.	Participation in group projects planned and carried out by children themselves.	Compulsory education. Inviting partnership of children in helping solve community problems. Developing partnership between home and school.
Character & Social (for developing ability to live with others in a co-operative and worthy way)	Good standards of behavior at home, encouraging honesty, sincerity, social service and spiritual development. Sex education.	Training child to co-operate with others in work and play and to complete difficult tasks for worthwhile ends.	Approval of child when a good sport (good loser, good winner, etc.)	Good character-building agencies—schools, churches, playgrounds, day nurseries, recreation centres, etc.
Physical (for developing a healthy body and good health habits)	Nutritious food, adequate sleep, suitable clothing, sanitary living quarters, medical and dental care, training in good health habits, outdoor activities.	Health education, physical training, co-operation with medical authorities in health inspection and immunization against disease.	Consideration by child of health and handicaps of associates. Full co-operation in preventing spread of contagious diseases.	Adequate medical and dental services. Immunization against diseases. Sanitary living conditions. Full social security.

Day Campers Over 12

This presentation was a panel discussion between four campers and two counselors with an emphasis on the following topics as related to campers over 12.

- program and program methods
- leadership styles
- personal objectives
- camp atmosphere
- inter-camp relationships.

Program

Senior campers agreed that the main reason they still look forward to going to camp is that the program is not static. Different activities and methods of presentation give them a new experience each year. The boys leaned toward challenging wilderness types of programs and emphasized self-satisfaction through accomplishment as being important. The girls were inclined to take part in a casual program emphasizing group interaction. All felt there should be a lot of opportunity to do what they wanted, sit under a tree and talk; work on a group project; go for a walk alone. Schedules do not enhance a good program for senior campers, unless they are developed by the campers themselves. Both boys and girls felt they should be able to drop out of a camp group if they wanted to at times.

Program Themes

These are not of interest to either group, particularly the Indian theme. Specific programs that interested the boys were: hiking, canoeing, horseback riding, and archery; the girls: canoeing, crafts, riding, and quiet time discussions.

Leadership

Leadership was mainly seen as being the relationship existing between counselor and camper. The campers felt they knew enough about camping to decide what to do and how to do it. The counselor provides them with an opportunity to widen their horizons by supplying new and different programs or approaches and must particularly be a friend or help-mate who is interesting and fun to be with. He or she must also be interested in sitting down and talking face-to-face.

The campers did not want a program imposed by counselor or anyone else, but rather wanted an opportunity to share in the program planning while being given an opportunity to branch into new activities.

Personal Objectives

Day campers come to camp to have an exciting and fun-filled summer. This means new programs developing skills; maintaining and making new friendships; and reliving past happy experiences. Awards and incentives are not necessary to give them this experience but they are not considered a hindrance.

Senior campers looked to a camp leadership role in the future and welcomed an opportunity to develop some leadership skills through acceptance of responsibilities.

Camp Atmosphere

The campers felt the atmosphere should be permissive enough to allow freedom to experiment with activities of interest. They felt that regulations for general camp security and safety do not apply unilaterally and that by virtue of their age and experience they should be allowed certain privileges such as use of knives and axes; restricted area; lights out on overnights; and being able to wander off on their own in small groups.

All campers felt that camp offered them the secure atmosphere of a second home where they could act in a manner quite apart from the way they would act in the city. Many of the things they do at camp would be considered foolish or childish in the city. Since many personal inhibitions are lost at camp, activities such as stunts; sing-songs; craft, etc. seem quite natural. They were unanimous when asked how their friends in the city felt about a day camp program. The campers felt sorry for their in-city friends, because they usually spent their summer hanging around and don't know what they're missing.

Inter-Camp Relationships

The senior campers do not want to participate with younger campers all day. However, they do enjoy coming together at such times as campfires. They want to feel a part of the total camp, but be a separate section within that framework. Their area should be removed from the other camp areas to ensure privacy which they felt was important. When they do come into contact with the rest of the campers they like to assume a special helper role which gives them status and recognition. Being responsible for some special event activities or helping at campfires are responsibilities they like to accept. The boys particularly liked being responsible for collecting wood for the camp fire and preparing the ceremonial fire lay. They felt that many equally important jobs or duties could be given them so long as they held a bit of prestige and couldn't be considered joe-jobs.

To summarize, there is definitely a place in day camping for children aged 12 and up. Program is wide open and so is the source of day campers. Few of us have full registration for this age group. A concentrated effort on the views expressed above should go a long way towards filling those vacancies.

the Different or Atypical Child- Integration or Segregation (a case study)

Integration or segregation, whether involving race, religion, color or creed, if it is to be real, and wholly meaningful, must encompass not only these terms of reference but must reach out and include the atypical child, bringing about a policy of integration without segregation or reservation. I think that camps and the camping movement can do much in this area. Any child who can benefit from a normal group experience—regardless of parents' religious beliefs, racial origins, or natural capacity for learning and growing, either physical or mental—should be given that opportunity.

In many years of working with them, I know of no children who were not better for having been with normal children or having a child in their group who had many more different or difficult problems, that did not gain much from this integration. The key to the explosion of hate, the key to good health, is acceptance, the right of every individual to be accepted and the need for every individual to understand and accept the varying degrees of difference in other individuals.

It has been found that in every group of 100 children 25 to 30% have major intellectual, physical and emotional problems. I am convinced that, if these individuals can find a place where they can find acceptance and learn to accept the disability that is theirs, much will be done to free these individuals to grow to the limits of their capabilities. Is it not possible to learn to accept that we have a harder job to learn than other people, or that we may never reach the goal of other people but that there is a very definite and accepted place for us and what we have to offer?

If these atypical children are ever to function in their community, then each one needs to be exposed to the reality of daily living and we who presume to be normal, must also be exposed to them and their needs.

How many times have you seen or heard a child burned badly being accusingly questioned by an adult as to "What happened to your face?" (and I use this word 'accusingly'because the tone of voice makes the child feel guilty and accused), or "What's wrong with your boy?" to a mother of a child with tosis. "That little girl is sick, come over here," a mother said to her child when encountering a borderline mongoloid, as if she had something contagious. Such things suggest that the education of this acceptance must start early and only by exposure and understanding can a race of unprejudiced adults ever come into being.

Let's examine some of the more extreme individual differences and how they functioned in a normal camp setting.

Roberto, a quick, agile, handsome lad, willing to please and with lots of ideas of his own, is an aphasic. From my first meeting, when he was three years old and unable to speak, to his fast growing 10½ years with some language, he has kept things boiling in his group. But his camper friends, his counselors and all of us have derived much benefit. Can you imagine the thrill when a 20-year-old counselor came running excitedly to get me to come and see and hear Roberto, who was calling off bingo numbers for his group in his awkward, difficult speech pattern. This was something to hear and see. Tears were in both our eyes. A camper, when it was decided Roberto should not go to another camp for soccer because he might create an incident, came with the whole group as a delegation requesting that we allow him to go—they would watch him. Roberto was excellent at following rules which he could visibly comprehend and he couldn't understand anyone breaking them. In fact, he could get fairly volatile. Right was right. However, he had learned much from his group over the years and when allowed to go, he was so successful and so aware in the second camp setting that their campers and director couldn't even place him. His buddies were so proud, and so was Roberto. So many successes, also many failures. One, I recall vividly. Roberto had discovered a way of protecting himself against kids' teasing—spitting in the faces of his antagonists. On occasion, someone got it. Outraged parents telephoned; children were to be removed. I didn't blame them, but requested they come down to camp to meet Roberto. They did, and they agreed finally that their children perhaps could benefit, and that if they reinforced the children's questions about why a little boy would do such a thing, rather than consider him a monster who should be isolated from society, we might begin to solve the problem. A discussion was held with all children in the section and they agreed that his action, while unacceptable, was understandable. They all agreed that they liked him but many were afraid of him and his difference. That was the beginning of the solving of Roberto's many social-emotional problems at our camp.

There was also a boy named Peter. He had many differences and difficulties. He had an odd appearance due to a cleft palate, hair lip, and a medical problem with his heart. Often he had bizarre behavior patterns and withdrawal tendencies not unlike an autistic schizophrenic (but without tantrums). Some brain damage had created some motor problems and he was often unintelligible. Peter was with us from the age of five. He is now 11. He was in our school operation during the winter months, to the grade 2 level, and is now in a special education class. Through all his problems and his mumblings, we discovered a delightful sense of humor and a good capacity for learning many things. The greatest threat with Peter was swimming. He loved to go to the pool, but he would immediately go underwater and stay at the bottom of the pool. We never had the courage to wait for his sense of survival to come forth. A staff member was always right with him at this time to haul him up on his feet and try again. With encouragement and the use of many positive reinforcement teaching skills, he has learned to swim a little.

Having the endorsement of his doctor and parents, Peter was encouraged to participate in everything. During a soccer game with his friends Peter's team scored a point and Peter was heard to mumble "That will put them on the griddle." The boys doubled over with laughter. Shouts of "Okay, Peter" or "Let's go, Peter" were often heard. I don't recall him doing much with the ball but he was part of it and the boys and counselors would encourage him with admiring remarks like "That was a good run you made" or "You're getting faster", etc.

Each boy was pleased to be Peter's companion for the day and they were rewarded in many ways. I recall a day when taking a walk away from the camp, Peter tired and had to sit down on a rock. He and his companion for that day were brought face-to-face with a grass snake shedding its skin. The whole group was called excitedly back to watch and Peter was proclaimed as the nature discoverer. So many things would have been missed without this child.

I hear many people say "I wouldn't want to work with special children; I might do the wrong thing." If everyone felt this way, and so many do, no one would do anything. I am convinced that anyone who will try can work wonders because they are saying "I care".

Assuming that you are not basically prejudiced, but that due to a lack of experience you feel inadequate and uncomfortable, then let me assure you, through a program of integration and interaction you will have rewarding experiences.

Philip was a child who used fear to manipulate his world. It took some doing to understand this. For example, it was agonizing to see him going into the pool daily, screaming that he was going to drown, yet all the time wanting to go. By the end of the first season the swim director came to me and said "We've come so far with Philip; he's ready to float but won't. What should I do?" My answer—"Walk away and let someone else take over." He went back to Philip and said:

"Philip, you are ready to float. I can't do that for you. I have helped you this far, now I must help other children. When you are ready to go on, let me know and we will continue." Two days later Philip floated. Within the next few weeks, many normal campers were passing tests and surprising counselors and swim staff. When asked "Why", the swim director said his staff had learned so much from working with Philip that they wanted to try it out on normal children. Fantastic results! Philip has been with us two years. He was to have been sent to Ontario Hospital. We were making mistakes, but so would they. He has solved and adjusted to his differences so he has already adjusted to the society about him.

There are also children with epilepsy, asthma, diabetes or heart disorders. These children seem to have built-in stop watches, and with medication, the first three are pretty well taken care of. Several children with epilepsy have coped well with medication, and last year, on doctor's orders only, rectal suppositories were used to help many campers stay on overnights, with great success. The victorious look on their faces in the morning was reward enough to counselors and us.

I have had only one severe diabetic and she required watching, although she was able to participate in all things. Her counselor always had an extra cookie and candy available. She taught us a lot about fear. When children become tense and anxious when afraid, they use up a great deal of sugar and can actually faint. In a diabetic this is serious, called a coma. In a normal child fear can create high temperatures, upset stomachs, and headaches. This explains sick stomachs after a scary night or a thunderstorm. Lifesavers or sweet candy can help to keep the tension down. I was never aware of this until after my association with Debbie.

If we are meeting individual needs, we must recognize that children with heart conditions need to be with other normal children, but should be allowed to pace themselves. They should do arts and crafts when other children are going on a very long hike. They should have shorter swim periods and more reading time. They know what they can do (that built-in stop watch). We can help them by not pushing them, but also by not letting them use their health as an excuse to get out of doing things that are good for them. Some exercise is very necessary for them.

A nine-year-old deaf child learned during a camp term to speak words like us, 'Sticky, splash, trampoline', using direct, fluent speech patterns, how exciting! One positive element with this physical malfunction is that it doesn't show. If children are accepted by their group, they've made it. Hearing aids are a nuisance, but so are glasses!

There are so many others, the cerebral palsies, the borderline mongoloids, the minimal brain damaged, the spastics, the polio victims, the blind, the mentally retarded, the perceptually handicapped and the thalidomide babies as well. Case history after case history, and so far all end up on the positive side of the ledger. The only type of child I have not had at my camp or school is a blind child and the only reason is that I've never been asked.

What has this done for the normal campers? We know that if they have a healthy experience with specific children they gain respect for others, and therefore themselves. They have greater understanding and become more considerate, less egocentred. Boys seem to accept differences easier than girls. Girls accept problem boy campers more than their own sex. Our feeling is that they and their counselors benefited most, not least.

Those of you who work with this age group may find Frit Redl's study of pre-adolescents "What Makes Them Tick" helpful. He says "Give him a free and experimental camp setting to be adventurous in, and he will be happily pre-adolescent without getting himself or anybody else in trouble." This age group should thrive on the interaction with the integrated atypical camper.

Lauren had been diagnosed as schizophrenic, aspheic, deaf, retarded, brain damaged, in other words, a blob. A label didn't help. It only confused and frightened. She needed to be accepted and enjoy, be free to start her climb to normalcy. Now, five years later, she is the most popular member of her family. Three and a half years ago she had no speech, now only the d's present a problem. I was fortunate in being with her over a 12-month period. It was her acceptance by people in the freedom of summer, the fun of learning water skills, running with the wind or lying in deep grass listening for sounds, that made Lauren work harder to be part of normal life.

There is specialization in many areas now. There is the camp for the blind, the camp for the retarded, the camp for the perceptually handicapped, the camp for the emotionally disturbed, the camp for the deaf.

Linda was a child in our camp last year, labelled a borderline mongoloid. Her I.Q. was 52—two points too high to be labelled one thing, not high enough to be labelled another. There appeared to be no place for her in a camp or in the school system. But, she taught her fellow-campers and her counselors how to share love, and especially how to say "I did it!", "What can I do now?" or "What should I have done?" Everyone of these children who were with Linda had an exciting and rewarding summer experience because of Linda.

They learned the responsibility of making an error, as a part of growing and learning. Many children feel threatened by what will happen if they make an error, so they make all kinds of excuses, tell lies and get other people into trouble. Linda didn't. In answer to "Who left their bedroll here?" she would say "I guess I was the one who did it. What should I have done?" When we explained that we realized it was hard for her to do it but she should get someone to help her, she immediately replied "Who will help me fold my bedroll?" Six voices said "I will Linda." The counselor chose two and together they showed Linda how it was done, so proud to be showing off their skill and knowledge. She doesn't sound like a borderline mongoloid, certainly not the kind I had read about. The children were held back sometimes by her slowness, but more often it was to wait behind to help her, and for this they were

rewarded by her beaming smile of thankfulness and joy, and her little, often overheard saying "You are wonderful." Of course, each camper's self-image and respect for one another leapt to great heights. Could this have happened without Linda?

Does labelling really help? Any label that sets a child aside from his or her basic needs of love and acceptance, and makes people feel uncomfortable and frightened, must be wrong. Any resulting interaction only makes the child more anxious, disturbed and sick. The condition must be known, but the child's other needs must not be neglected because of the label. There are many problems with special children, but surely we can be expected only to care enough to do our best. Camping, which is relaxed, does much for a special child.

Discipline a Matter of Human Relations

In the area of human relations, most young people coming to a summer camp for the first time find themselves abruptly in a strange territory with few landmarks. Their experience with discipline has found them for the most part on the receiving end.

First, as leaders, they should realize that there are few born leaders. Most of us have to work at the art. Secondly, as senior leaders, we do not expect the new staff member to acquire naturally the proper attitude and accepted means of disciplining children. We remember their feelings of incompetence in this area of newness, and we know how uncomfortable they are in the presence of the unknown foe. We must, then, share what has been an evolution in our own style and methods of handling children.

What is Discipline?

Unfortunately, the very word discipline tends to imply the military meaning of total submission of the individual to an authority. Any deviation from the established order is rewarded with punishment of some nature.

The Latin word discipulus means follower. The French word discere means to learn. The English root for discipline is the same as that of disciple, which means a follower of a teacher.

At camp, discipline does not connote misdemeanors and crude physical punishments, but rather teaching, training, guidance and mutual trust. We discipline campers with the long-term goal of helping to contribute to the development of the child's inner controls so that he or she can live effectively as an adult in society. Granting that the ultimate aim of teaching self-discipline is a slowly acquired attainment for children, at camp it should be our goal.

Suggestions for Developing a Good Camping Atmosphere:

The old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure certainly holds true for the modern counselor. For every accident there is a cause. For every discipline problem there is a reason. In order to understand the reason, counselors must first look to:

- themselves
- their attitude
- their program

and then to their campers. The behavior of children is usually a symptom. It is necessary to find the points of infection before a lasting change in the child's behavior can be made. Once the motive is understood, one must cultivate an objectivity which will reject the misbehavior without rejecting the camper.

The following tried and tested preventatives might serve as guidelines for the new leader. The list is long, but by no means exhaustive.

- watch your camper as much as you can. By being constantly alert you can spot a potential troublemaker before the plan to create a problem is more than a gleam in his/her eye

- know what you are doing! Advance preparation and some organization will save you many headaches. When your campers find out you are a phoney and playing it by ear they will lose all confidence in you. When confidence and subsequently respect is lost, your discipline and control of your charges will rapidly disintegrate

- be enthusiastic! That word is a most popular one among unit leaders. Have a keen and genuine interest in your campers and their activities. Enthusiasm is catching. Avoid monotony in your presentations. Occasionally vary your style, your inflection, as well as your pose and your tone

- from the arrival of your campers, show that you are a firm but fair leader. You set the tone for your group. Earn respect by showing it. Be firm until expected behavioral patterns are established. Remember that children expect to be disciplined. They will cooperate only if they know what is expected of them

- set your standards, establish few requirements. Be sure what you want is clearly defined, reasonable, and within the reach and capacity of the age group with which you are working

- be positive in your instructions and directions. Point out the reason why we do things in a certain way

- no favoritism, (although it will be there). Show a genuine liking for your campers and your job, a faith in the better nature of your wards, and always a sense of humor

- plan constructive, positive, and meaningful activities for your campers. Most trouble results from boredom or inactivity

- before you get excited, save yourself trouble and help the camper by thinking your way into his or her feelings and then putting those feelings into words for both of you. (e.g. "You're disappointed—you were counting on this and now we can't do it and that makes you mad," or "It's hard to wait for something you like, isn't it?") Do this before you try any of the other discipline techniques, such as arguing, reasoning, preaching, lecturing and using your fancy psychological tricks.

- try to learn each particular child's language and learn to use it naturally. It also means learning the child's particular feelings about things, especially the areas that are charged for him or her, e.g. food, physical contact or injury, losing in games.

- aggressive behavior and disturbing behavior very often start from the child's anxiety which is a result of anger or resentment. While it may not be possible to discover what the camper is anxious about, the situation can often be helped by something that makes the child feel safe

- if the camper might tell you on his or her own, make the opportunity, asking questions such as "Is there anything you want to tell me?" Don't interrupt without apology and explanation, and only then do so sparingly. Don't ask "Why?" Usually children don't know "why?" or can't express it if they do.

- when a problem has been explored in the above ways, help the camper frame his or her own plans for improving the situation, away from the other camper's ears

- the average leader talks too much. The good counselor talks only when the campers are listening and when he or she has something important to say. Speaking clearly, simply, in a dignified and authoritative tone, at a moderate speed, will be most effective. The counselor, in turn, must give the campers every opportunity to talk while he or she listens.

<u>When Should a Child Be Disciplined?</u>

The general rule is that children need to be redirected when they act in a disturbing and annoying manner which affects the other members of the group in a negative manner. What does this theory really mean?

a) When the camper becomes uncooperative and does not respond to reasonable and necessary suggestions and/or directions of the leader, some control must obviously be exercised.

b) Children of all ages are fond of testing the limits of their superiors. When the child goes beyond the boundaries set by the leader, then the child must be controlled. Here again it might be noted that a busy camper is seldom mischievous.

c) As long as a camper is a member of a social unit, he or she must be conditioned to do a proportion of the work and to participate where it is necessary to do so with fellow members.

d) Every camp has certain regulations which must be adhered to. A conscious breaking of these becomes a discipline problem to be dealt with.

Experience has taught that misdemeanors must be checked but do not be petty. Be sure the camper sees you later if the incident requires more than a word or two at the time. "See everything and notice little."

Some Control Techniques

Signal Interference: When a camper is disturbing discussion or not paying attention to instructions, a dramatic pause, a nod, or a wave will be a signal for her or him. If the child is aware of your intentions, sometimes nothing more is needed for minor problems.

Proximity Control: Move into the area of the disturbance and settle it by your mere physical presence without interrupting your planned program.

Direct Appeal: Show your displeasure by use of your voice, employing a tone of authority. Avoid yelling. Always follow through if the child persists in misbehaving. Do not overuse the voice. A calm but stern tone will make your point quite adequately.

Do not make threats. Never say, "Do this or else!" You either have to back such statements up which may be injudicious, or back down which is suicidal. When you make threats, you tie your own hands.

This Matter of Justice

There are, unfortunately, no pat solutions for particular problems. Each case and each child deserves individual and unique consideration. What is the child's family situation? What are the child's handicaps? What is the child's general social adjustment to camp life? What could be the possible cause of the action? What might be a practical solution? Punishment?

Each discipline problem is usually a conflict between people. Thus it is the personality characteristics of the people involved that are the controlling factors, and these characteristics can be so different in different environments that it is impossible and impractical to suggest solutions to the problems.

Be certain, in order to be just, that everyone is fully aware of the consequences of misbehavior. Show the natural and fair action for the offenses. Be certain also that each camper sees a lesson to be learned for the punishment.

The leader must be dependable and consistent in all decisions. A counselor must be sure that justice is always tempered with:

- compassion, never sarcasm or belittlement. Avoid anything that hurts the camper's self-esteem. Never punish so that the camper is teased, embarrassed, or ridiculed even when it appears harmless and the camper appears to be taking it in a good spirit

- empathy, which is not sympathy

- complete mental presence, never when you are impassioned with the deed or the circumstances. The effect of a loud reprimand is usually just the reverse. The louder the leader, the less the camper hears. When you lose your temper you become an easy mark for other budding mischievous campers.

Discipline is never:

- retaliation
- retribution
- punishment for punishment's sake or group punishment. The innocent are justifiably resentful.

Punishment is always the last resort. In no instance may justice at camp take the form of physical punishment.

Studies show that 95 percent of all children respond to motivation. Therefore it follows that discipline problems will be kept to a minimum if the campers are provided with proper motivation and intelligent direction by their leader.

Further Reading

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There are additional books on this topic, some of which are out of print or are distributed by American publishers who do not maintain Canadian representation. Access to such books may often be gained at local public libraries or in the personal libraries of individuals associated with camping.